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Korea, Republic of

Poultry and Products

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Outbreak

2003

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Report Highlights:

Korean poultry meat exports have been banned while authorities work to bring an outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza under control. Consumer concerns have dampened poultry consumption temporarily. Producer prices of chicken have dropped 17 percent in response to reduced demand.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Seoul [KS1]
[KS]

On December 15, 2003, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) confirmed an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), serotype H5N1. The outbreak occurred in a chicken farm located in the Eumsung District of North Chungchung Province, in the central part of the nation. Two additional outbreaks have been confirmed in a duck farm and a layer farm located near the first outbreak farm. In response to the outbreaks, MAF established an affected zone, danger zone, and control zone to effectively control the disease.

On December 19, two more suspected cases were reported outside of the danger zone and an investigation is underway. If confirmed, the cases outside of current danger zone would indicate the outbreaks are more widespread than first thought. Below is a status report on the HPAI outbreak and measures taken to date.

Status of Outbreak Reports and Investigations

- December 12: Responding to reports that over 20,000 chickens had died at a poultry farm, MAF investigated and detected suspected Avian Influenza. The farm produced parent stock farm for broilers.
- December 15: The National Veterinary Research & Quarantine Service (NVRQS) confirmed that the suspected case was HPAI (serotype H5N1).
- December 15: The second HPAI case was confirmed in a duck farm located within 2.5 kilometers radius from the first outbreak farm.
- December 17: The third HPAI case was confirmed in a layer farm located within 2.5 kilometers radius from the first outbreak farm.
- December 19: Two more cases in duck farms were reported outside of the 3-kilometer danger zone (located 3.5 to 4 kilometers from the first outbreak farm). Confirmation is underway.

As of December 19, a total of five cases have been reported. Three have been confirmed as HPAI and two cases are under investigation.

Measures Taken

- 1st outbreak farm raised 26,000 birds of broiler parent-stock. Of the total 26,000 birds, 21,000 birds died and the remaining 5,000 birds were destroyed.
- The entire flock of 3,480 ducks at the 2nd outbreak farm and at 3rd outbreak farm all 15,000 layers were destroyed.
- MAF established a danger zone at a 3 kilometers radius around the affected farm and decided to destroy and bury all chickens and ducks and edible eggs produced within that area. MAF ordered one hatching plant in that zone to shut down. Within the danger zone, there are 10 chicken farms with 205,000 birds and four duck farms with 23,000 birds.
- MAF also established a control zone (between 3 and 10 kilometers radius) around the affected farm. Within that area, 64 farms -- 34 chicken and 30 duck farms -- are located. MAF decided to destroy all duck eggs produced in this zone. Ducks slaughtered in the zone will be tested three days prior to movement from the farm for slaughter. Excrement and

serological tests will be conducted on all duck farms within this zone. If any suspicious samples are found, the total flock (400,000 birds) will be destroyed and buried.

- Movement restrictions have been implemented for all poultry within a 10 kilometers radius around the affected farm effective for 30 days from the outbreak.

- As of December 18, 1,630,000 eggs had been destroyed. As of December 19, 2003, the total number of birds destroyed reached 129,000 birds in nine farms. This procedure will continue until all birds within the danger zone are destroyed.

- A total of 16 checkpoints, employing 108 people have been established within the 10 kilometer restricted movement area. Serological tests were conducted on birds from three different duck farms within the danger zone. The test results of the 131 ducks were negative. Serological tests for 103 chickens are also being conducted on five additional chicken farms within a 10 kilometer radius from each outbreak. MAF is also testing migratory bird excrement taken from around the affected farm. 400 hundreds samples are being tested. MAF suspects migratory birds as a possible source of HPAI.

Human Transmission

The Korean National Institute of Health (NIH) has asked the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) to test an isolated virus sample taken from one of the farms where the outbreak occurred to see if this virus is the type that can be transmitted to humans. The sample was sent to CDC and test results are expected in three to four weeks. NIH also strengthened the surveillance program for people residing near the affected farms and is conducting an epidemic investigation, supplying vaccines, etc.

Korean Exports

Korean poultry exports including chicken and breeding stock to Japan, Hong Kong, China, etc., have been suspended due to the HPAI outbreak. In 2003, Korea exported 300,000 breeding birds and 3,000 MT of broiler meat.